

Wycombe hold out for a point

Sports Mail Special Report

A CHARACTERISTIC goal by Paul Bates, scored in the 38th. minute, gave Wycombe Wanderers a well-deserved 1—0 interval lead against Dulwich Hamlet. Bates's goal — the result of a great drive — was his fifth against Hamlet this season.

Dulwich Hamlet: Darvill; Kent, Hammond; Smallman, Skipper, Merritt; Mills, Field, Brown, Wallis, Vail.

Wycombe Wanderers: Brown; Beck, Atkins; Thomas, Fisher, D. Worley; Rockell, L. Worley, Bates, James, Tomlin.

Referee: B. J. Matthews.

Hamlet defenders were intent on keeping an eye on Bates, but he proved very elusive, bobbing up dangerously in right-wing raids.

The crisp Wycombe attack had Hamlet in early trouble. Full back Kent managed to rob Len Worley, but then nearly walked the ball past his own goalkeeper and into the net.

Most of the action was in the Dulwich half, but it was Wycombe who had the luckiest escape.

Soon after Bates had headed a Rockell centre just wide, international Les Brown, centre forward, trundled upfield in determined fashion and shot against the angle of the Wycombe woodwork.

WORLEY'S FINE ROLE

But a Dulwich lead at this stage would have been a travesty of justice. As if to underline the point, Wycombe retaliated immediately and Rockell shot against the goalkeeper's body from close range.

Hamlet began to get a grip on the game and Wycombe had to defend strongly. Mills headed wide of the Wycombe goal during a series of attacks. Strong play by Dave Worley was a great help to Wycombe.

Thomas and Fisher were also prominent in the Wycombe defence.

The centre of the pitch was ankle deep in mud and water and play became a farce at times.

As the Wanderers were forced increasingly on the defensive a Rockell drive over the crossbar was the best they could manage for a long spell, but Len Worley, who was working exceptionally hard, cut menacingly down the wing and Darvill had to fling himself at the ball to stop the centre reaching James.

After 38 minutes BATES scored a magnificent goal for Wycombe, coolly trapping a Tomlin centre and smashing the ball past Darvill.

Half-time: Dulwich Hamlet 0, Wycombe Wanderers 1.

GRIM STRUGGLE

Wycombe hung on grimly to their slender lead and showed plenty of spirit as Hamlet pressed strongly.

Brown dived to smother the ball at the feet of Mills and Field hooked just wide.

When Wanderers raised the siege, they should have gone further ahead. Rockell sprinted clear of the defence after a bad Dulwich error, but when the centre came over Bates shot weakly at the goalkeeper.

Darvell then made spectacular saves from Worley's shot and a Tomlin header which looked like curling into the net near the far post.

In the 75th minute, during a fiery Dulwich onslaught, the ball was handled, and MERRITT rolled the ball into the net from the penalty spot.

Hamlet threw everything into the attack in a bid for the winning goal, but Wycombe held on in thrilling fashion.

RESULT:

DULWICH HAMLET 1
WYCOMBE W. 1

WYCOMBE EARN A TOUGH POINT

Dulwich H 1 Wycombe 1

WYCOMBE deserved this hard-earned Isthmian League point against a Dulwich Hamlet side struggling to return to winning form after a long losing run.

Wycombe impressed up to half-time by keeping the game open with long swinging passes. They deservedly went ahead when Paul Bates scored in the 38th minute with a well-placed shot.

Dulwich fought back strongly in the second half, both Leslie Brown and newcomer Ron Mills going close with good scoring attempts. The hard-pressed Wycombe defence owed much to John Fisher for a fine display at centre half.

In the 75th minute Reg Merritt put Dulwich level from a penalty following a handling offence.